



February 3, 2017

KANSAS BULLETIN NO. KS300-17-29

SUBJECT: LTP–Environmental Quality Incentives Program–Funding Distribution and Decisions

Purpose: To issue fiscal year (FY) 2017 Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) funding distribution and provide instructions for application approval.

Expiration Date: September 30, 2017

EQIP Allocation

The FY2017 Kansas EQIP financial assistance allocation is \$25,094,000. The distribution of these funds is represented on Attachments 1, 2, 3, and 4. Area allocations were based on the extent of each ranking category's resource concern in that area. The Resource Management Zone (RMZ) and Management Unit (MU) funds are allocated based on the extent of resource concern in each RMZ and MU. Narratives for the area, RMZ, and MU allocation calculations, are included in Attachment 5.

The allocation will also be used to fund the following (see Attachment 1):

- Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG)
- Anderson Creek Wildfire Initiative (ACWI)
- Lesser Prairie Chicken Initiative (LPCI)
- Monarch Butterfly Habitat Development Initiative (MBHDI)
- National Organic Initiative (NOI)
- National On-Farm Energy Initiative (NOFEI)
- National High Tunnel System Initiative (NHTSI)
- National Water Quality Initiative (NWQI)
- Ogallala Aquifer Initiative (OAI)
- State reserve for application cost overruns

EQIP Contracting Authority

Per Title 440–Conservation Programs Manual (CPM), Conservation Program Contracting (CPC), Part 512, Section KS512.3(A), the state conservationist (STC) has delegated the authority for signing EQIP financial assistance agreements (contracts) to the assistant state conservationists for field operations (ASTCs-FO).

Funding Recommendations and Decisions

ASTCs-FO will prepare funding decisions for the RMZ allocation ranking category of Grazing Lands

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Health, and MU ranking category of Water Quality. Funding decisions for Livestock Waste, Soil Health, and Water Quantity will also be prepared by the ASTCs-FO.

The EQIP manager will prepare funding recommendations for Forestland Health, Wildlife Habitat, Sedimentation above Federal Reservoirs, Tribal, and all Beginning Farmer/Rancher, Limited Resource Farmer/Rancher, and Socially Disadvantaged Farmer/Rancher fund codes. These decisions will be provided to the ASTCs-FO.

Each ranking category ranking list will be archived hard copy, filed, and retained in the appropriate administrative file.

The following guidance shall be used to make decisions during the funding process:

- The Conservation Programs Geographic Information System (GIS) Interface (CPGI), Program Contracts System (ProTracts), and Application and Evaluation Ranking Tool (AERT) will be used to evaluate and rank all eligible applications. The AERT will be used to make funding decisions.
- Applications shall be evaluated using statewide evaluation ranking criteria issued with Bulletin KS300-17-19–Environmental Quality Incentives Program Ranking Process, and must only include eligible conservation practices (see Bulletin KS300-17-17–Environmental Quality Incentives Program—Eligible Practices for Ranking Categories), and is to be in accordance with CPM, EQIP, Part 515, Section 515.81. In addition, all limitation and requirement incorporated in the 2017 EQIP Payment Schedule will be followed.
- The ASTCs-FO will ensure that any application made by a Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) employee is reviewed by area office (AO) staff.
- The ASTCs-FO will ensure that any application for land which an NRCS employee is directly associated with is reviewed by the AO staff (e.g., listed in Farm Service Agency (FSA) records as operator, but not a participant to the application).
- Use ProTracts Task Guides 3 and 4 for preparing and ranking applications (see http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/ks/people/employees/?cid=nrcs142p2_033434).
- The ASTCs-FOs should consider a reserve for application cost overruns in the ranking categories for which they are responsible as they begin to make funding decisions.
- A RMZ or MU allocation will not be used elsewhere in an area until all eligible RMZ or MU allocation ranking category applications have been funded in that RMZ or MU.
- Unused ranking category funds from a RMZ or MU should be used to fund other RMZ or MU applications in the same ranking category within the NRCS administrative area before being redistributed to other RMZ or MU subaccounts in other areas.
- All applications in an area ranking category must be funded before funds are redistributed to another ranking category.

- After ASTCs-FO fund all eligible applications received by the application evaluation period cutoff date, remaining funds shall be returned to the state office (SO) for redistribution.
- In redistributing funds to other ranking categories, the ASTCs-FO will take into consideration the Kansas Technical Committee (KTC) recommendations (see Attachment 1), as well as specific area goals. Fund codes will not be combined outside of ProTracts to make funding decisions.
- Once application approvals are made, field offices will compile appropriate documents and submit documentation to the Document Management System (DMS) for second level review. Once second level review has been “accepted,” the ASTC-FO shall obligate contracts.

Contact: Forward questions through established channels to Joel A. Willhoft, Resource Conservationist, at (785) 624-3127 or by email at joel.willhoft@ks.usda.gov.

(signed)

ERIC B. BANKS
State Conservationist

Attachments